

CORRIDOR CONSTRUCTION

Changing the appearance of highway design requires a rethinking of the highway construction process. Key to the ultimate appearance of LBJ is the final design prepared by the engineers. Responsible for execution of the Urban Design team's concepts, the engineering firms preparing the construction documents will play an important role in the expressway's appearance. A willingness to explore new concepts and go beyond typical highway department standards is essential to this new approach.

The elimination of randomly selected alternates in the bidding process is another important aspect of the process. When great effort and expense is expended to develop an improved design, it doesn't make sense to dilute that design by substitutions, which do not conform to the overall design intent. Careful review of alternates submitted by the contractors is a necessary part of the design process.

A third component to the construction process is the need for the ongoing involvement of the design team - architects, landscape architects, planners and engineers. Review and inspection of the project in the field by the team should be incorporated into the process. This will allow field adjustments to be made consistent with the overall design concept. It will also ensure familiarization of the contractors with the initial design intent.

LBJ IMPROVEMENT ASSOCIATION

Although the expressway is lined by many different sizes, shapes, and types of properties, each with its own set of priorities, there are common concerns that need to be addressed by an organization of all property owners.

The North Dallas Chamber of Commerce/LBJ Task Force served an invaluable function during the planning phase of this project, coordinating stakeholders and investigating design concepts. Now, as the project

moves into implementation, the Task Force should evolve into or be replaced by an organization designed to coordinate the day to day implementation phase of the project's private sector aspects. Left to the isolated efforts of the many different individuals and agencies involved, LBJ will not achieve its full potential. An active association and its staff can guide the many individual parties in their common purposes.

The association membership, which would be voluntary, should consist of owners of residential, commercial, and institutional property along the expressway. Start-up funding might be achieved through a combination of public contracts, grants, and private subscriptions. Ultimately, the association would be funded by membership fees.

These would be some of the functions of the association:

- To assist the construction process by serving as a liaison to private property owners, monitoring construction schedules and working with TxDOT to maintain the flow of traffic.
- To assist in traffic demand management during and after construction.
- To promote urban design activities along the corridor by lobbying city and state agencies for funding.
- To secure private sector investment.
- To provide an information clearing house, and to facilitate and coordinate individual efforts and improvements.

SPECIFIC PROGRAMS

More than a set of drawings, a series of plans and programs will be needed to insure the successful redevelopment of LBJ

UTILITY COORDINATION

The LBJ right-of-way has many demands on the limited space available. Use of the right-of-way as a major utility corridor brings with it particular problems. Coordination among utility companies, the State, the City, and property owners is essential to the accommodation of all parties. The magnitude of this reconstruction demands that the overall design not be diminished by a lack of attention to location of utilities.

Two issues are of particular importance. First is the elimination of overhead lines. All relocation and replacement of existing overhead lines should move the lines underground. The visual disruption and the conflicts with landscape improvements that overhead lines create are not justifiable in a reconstruction effort of this scale.

Second is the displacement of landscape development by utility easements. The parkway area between frontage road curbs and right-of-way lines has been designated for utilities, precluding for significant landscape improvements adjacent to the road way. Additional utility easements outside the parkway will further increase the distance between trees and the roadway.

LBJ SPECIAL PROVISION SIGN DISTRICT

Designation of a Special Sign District as allowed by the Dallas Sign Regulations could help to decrease visual clutter in the expressway corridor. Because signs are important to business owners, the Sign District could address the issue of visibility of businesses along the Corridor.

FUNDING

The extent of improvements needed throughout the Corridor will require financial resources beyond the TxDOT/CITY of Dallas budget.

Identifying additional funding resources for the programs and projects described above is an important part of the implementation strategy.

BEAUTIFICATION PROGRAMS AND MATCHING FUNDING

Primary sources of financial assistance are cooperative agreements among property owners, foundations, and the TxDOT. Maximizing the financial resources of all, these agreements are a little-used resource that will be especially appropriate to the LBJ project.

DONATIONS

Donations of plant materials, design services, and ongoing maintenance by organizations and individuals are potential sources of major improvement along the expressway corridor. The Dallas Parks Foundation (formerly Treescape Dallas) is the type of foundation that can affect the enhancement of the LBJ corridor.

GRANTS

If united under one organization, property owners can increase their access to state and federal programs that will assist in improvements to the LBJ corridor. Site specific projects such as neighborhood gateways and the Linear Greenways are potential candidates for special funds.